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REPORT OF A COMMITTEE ON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS, DENVER, COLORADO

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In the spring of 1921 a committee was appointed by Superintendent Jesse H. Newlon to inquire into the length of the school day and the status of supervised or directed study in the junior high school. A list of twenty-two questions was sent to one hundred cities, and ninety-five replies were received from sixty-three school systems. In several instances answers were received from two or more schools in the same system, but there was enough variation in these schools to justify the tabulation of the answers from each school.

Great variation in practice is indicated by the answers received. No doubt, this is partly due to peculiar circumstances surrounding the individual school, the answers indicating that overcrowded conditions, lack of buildings, and lack of teachers trained for specific junior high school problems were forcing large classes, short periods, double sessions, preventing the direction of study and regular assembly periods, and curtailing extra-curricular activities. In several instances building programs were in process of accomplishment.

The questionnaire embraced three parts: Questions concerning the school day; questions concerning supervised study; and questions as to procedure, advisory periods, etc.

The first set of questions related to the school day. Table I indicates a school day of about five and one-half to six hours with school opening from 8:30 to 8:45 and closing from 3:15 to 4:00 in a large number of places. The time of closing is affected by the length of the noon recess and by the length of the class periods. Nineteen of the ninety-five answers indicate a day longer than six hours. Where the day is five hours or less, it seems to be due

to peculiar circumstances, such as two schools occupying the same rooms, one in the forenoon and one in the afternoon.

TABLE I

Clock Hours in School Day	Number of Schools	Time of Opening	Number of Schools	Time of Closing	Number of Schools
4 hrs.	1	7:30	1	12:30	1
4 hrs. 20 min.	3	8:00	4	1:10	1
5 hrs.	3	8:15 or 8:20 ..	12	1:45	2
5 hrs. 15 min.	4	8:25 or 8:30 ..	43	2:30	4
5 hrs. 20 min.	9	8:40 or 8:45 ..	23	2:40	1
5 hrs. 30 min.	14	8:50 or 9:00 ..	12	2:50	2
5 hrs. 40 min.	10			3:00	8
5 hrs. 50 min.	6			3:05	3
6 hrs.	26			3:10	5
6 hrs. 10 min.	8			3:15	17
6 hrs. 20 min.	7			3:20	3
6 hrs. 30 min.	2			3:30	14
7 hrs. 15 min.	1			3:40	10
7 hrs. 50 min.	1			3:50	3
				4:00	19
				4:15	1
				4:30	1

Seventy-five of the schools have from six to eight periods per day, while the extremes are four and ten periods. Fifty-eight schools have periods ranging from forty-five to sixty minutes, while twenty-four have periods of forty minutes. In the majority of cases the time required for changing classes is included.

TABLE II

Number of Class Periods	Number of Schools	Length of Class Periods in Minutes	Number of Schools
4	4	30	1
5	7	35	6
6	23	40	24
7	14	45	24
8	38	50	11
9	6	55	6
10	3	60	17
		65	2
		70	1
		75	1
		80	2

The number of class periods depends on the length of the school day and the length of the periods. The length of the periods

depends to a considerable extent on whether time is set aside in each class period for directed study.

The noon period varies greatly in length, seemingly being governed by the local situation. Where pupils cannot go home for luncheon because of the distance, the lunch period is from thirty to forty minutes in length. In some instances supervised play or physical education is given during a long noon intermission.

TABLE III

Length of Noon Period in Minutes	Number of Schools	Length of Recess in Minutes	Number of Schools
0.....	1	0.....	79
30.....	19	10.....	8
40 and 45.....	20	15.....	2
50.....	8	20.....	5
60.....	20	25.....	2
60 and 75.....	9		
80.....	4		
90.....	12		
100.....	1		
110.....	1		

The second series of questions related to supervised or directed study. Seventy-four of the ninety-five schools have part of the class periods devoted to supervised study, while twenty-one do not. Two schools indicated classes on the laboratory plan, and these are included in the supervised study class. The time is approximately one-half of the period and ranges from twenty to thirty minutes per period except in a few cases.

The merits of supervised study in the order of frequency of mention are most interesting. An effort has been made to group the answers under as few heads as possible and yet not to misinterpret them. The advantages of supervised study follow:

	Number of Schools
Saves mental effort; gives helpful guidance and thus prevents waste of effort by pointing out direction of work and how to study.....	22
Conditions for study better than at home	4
Individual attention and assistance given	11
Explanation of assignments and interpretation of texts.....	9
Gets results; better scholarship; fewer failures.....	7

	Number of Schools
Organization of material	10
Increases effort; buckles down; prevents laziness	10
Independence of solution and work	4
Holds interest	1
Teaches habits of study	11
Proper apportionment of time to each study	1
Definiteness of attack increased	3
Avoids home study	1
Permits the dictation of study question	1

The following difficulties were mentioned in connection with supervised study:

- Teachers not trained to supervise study; do not know how.
- Teachers fail to give time for study but use for recitation; lack of appreciation.
- Large classes; overcrowded conditions.
- Lack of equipment and libraries.
- Pupils become dependent on the teacher; too much help given.
- School day too short; periods too short.
- Variation in ability of children.
- No satisfactory technique developed for teaching how to study.
- Incompetent teachers.
- Too many subjects.
- Indefinite assignments.

Information concerning periods for study outside of the recitation periods is included in Table IV. The study is supervised in fifty-eight schools; in eleven schools it is not supervised.

TABLE IV

NUMBER OF PERIODS	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS		
	Grade VII	Grade VIII	Grade IX
0	31	30	20
1	32	31	31
2	16	16	24
3	13	14	17
4	1		4
5		1	

The amount of home study required is presented in Table V. Home study is recommended but not assigned in two schools.

It is very evident that the tendency in junior high schools is toward a long school day and a minimum amount of study outside of school.

The principals of the schools indicated the need for careful direction of methods of study and of study periods and are fairly agreed that the lack of specific training of teachers along this particular line is the greatest hindrance to the success of such supervision. Our teacher training schools might well stress the direction of study. The long period giving not less than thirty minutes for study during the class period is necessary.

TABLE V

AMOUNT OF HOME STUDY IN MINUTES	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS		
	Grade VII	Grade VIII	Grade IX
0.....	41	41	31
15.....	1	.....	.....
20.....	1	.....	.....
30.....	8	10	6
40.....	.....	.....	4
45.....	8	.....	.....
50.....	.....	5	2
60.....	16	15	16
75.....	.....	4	.....
90.....	10	13	10
120.....	3	3	19

The questions in the third part of the questionnaire were general in nature. Eighty-three of the schools included Grades VII, VIII, and IX. Four schools were composed of Grades VI, VII, and VIII. These figures are not especially significant as an effort was made to send the questions only to schools having the three-year course.

Fifty of the ninety-five schools reported that they have regular advisory periods of some sort, and in seventy-eight schools the regular teachers act as advisors.

Other devices to take care of the individual pupil are as follows:

	Number of Schools
Principals and assistants as advisors.....	10
Adjustment or restoration classes.....	10
Counselors or vocational counselors.....	8
Home-room teachers as advisors.....	7
Classroom advisors and coach teachers.....	5
Teachers as advisors of selected groups.....	5
Home visits by special or regular teachers.....	4
Intelligence and placement tests.....	3
Many devices (probably combinations of foregoing items) ..	1

There can be no doubt that a great effort is being made to help the individual solve his problems in the junior high school.

Seventy-four of the ninety-five schools have assembly periods, many of them at irregular intervals. Inadequate auditoriums, or none at all, seem to be responsible for this condition in many cases. Where meetings are irregular in time and length, they are evidently held for special lectures or entertainments and seemingly without a definite plan to make them function as part of the regular educational scheme.

Thirty-nine schools indicated special activities other than those of the assembly period, a summary of which is here given. These activities are in some cases unique and in other instances include subjects usually classed as regular school activities. Ten listed orchestras; eight, glee clubs and choruses; eight, class and government organizations; seven, physical education, physical training, or gymnasium; while one or more indicated the following: music, community singing, advisory, banking, milk drill, hobby clubs, drawing, home-room clubs, manual training, domestic arts, devotional exercises, vocational lectures, special "pep" meetings, Camp Fire Reserves, hiking, literary period, thrift, bird clubs, and debating.

Thirty-two schools have single class periods for manual work. The schools having short class periods usually have a double period for manual work, while nine schools use a period from two to three hours in length.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM TEACHERS

After the return of the questionnaires sent to outside sources, a brief inquiry was made among the junior high school teachers of Denver in order to ascertain the attitude toward the present conditions. The questionnaires were returned unsigned, and every opportunity was given for an open expression of opinion.

Some extremes of opinion were produced, but these tended to come from the teachers of but one or two years' experience. Since no Denver teacher has served longer than five years in the junior high school and the average is only 2.23 years, the results might have been very contradictory. They are, in fact, surprisingly con-

sistent and indicate a general satisfaction with the present arrangement. Answers were received from 122 teachers. The summary follows:

1. Length of service in the junior high school.

One year or less	41
One to two years	32
Two to three years	25
Three to four years	11
Five years	7

2. How many minutes do you assign to supervised study?

None	15
20 minutes	19
25 minutes	50
30 minutes	11
35 minutes	2
40 minutes	1
Whole period	7

The two extremes came from teachers of unprepared subjects and are due to the varying opinions as to what supervised study really is.

3. Do you use the first or last part of the period for supervised study?

First part	3
Last part	61
All	4
Varies	9

4. Is it advisable to continue to give time for supervised study?

Yes	93
No	2

5. If so, should there be an increase of the class period?

Yes	18
No	72

6. What are the advantages of supervised study?

Teaches correct habits of study	53
Economizes time and effort	19
Gives opportunity for individual attention	34
Work is directed, and mistakes are corrected before they become habitual	7

Secures favorable conditions for study	13
Teaches pupils to work independently	9
Reduces need of home work	3
Increases sympathy between pupil and teacher	5
Lessens failures	3
Best time for preparation is after assignment	3

7. What are the difficulties in connection with supervised study?

Makes pupils dependent	52
Lack of time and materials	19
Teacher monopolizes time for recitation	5
Poor pupil gets more than his share of time	2
Individual differences too great	11
Lack of training on the part of teacher	13
Indolent pupil a problem	6

8. What should be the length of the school day?

<i>a)</i> Time of opening:		<i>d)</i> Clock hours in school day:	
8:00	1	5	6
8:30	96	$5\frac{1}{2}$	2
9:00	14	$5\frac{3}{4}$	3
<i>b)</i> Noon period:		6	43
25 to 30 minutes	71	$6\frac{1}{4}$	18
40 to 45 minutes	44	$6\frac{1}{2}$	7
60 minutes	6	$6\frac{3}{4}$	6
<i>c)</i> Time of closing:		$7\frac{1}{4}$	20
2:30	5	$7\frac{1}{2}$	3
3:00	19	8	2
3:15	43	$8\frac{1}{2}$	1
3:30	26	4 to 8	1
3:45	2		
4:00	7		
4:15	1		

9. What is the aim of supervision in your subject?

To train to work independently and efficiently	25
To increase intelligent power of attack	13
To give individual assistance	10
To develop judgment and self-critical attitudes	3
To arouse and sustain interest	8
To teach correct habits of study	44
To economize time and effort	8

10. What is your method of procedure?

Individual help	39
Make assignments definite and attractive	34
Maximum and minimum assignments with careful grouping	6
Best methods in how to study	19
Study, recitation, silent study	5
Individual or group help	17

RESULTS OF THE INQUIRY MADE IN THE NINTH GRADES
OF DENVER

After information had been collected from one of the two chief factors in supervised study, namely, the teacher, the committee thought that evidence of the attitude of the other factor, the child, toward this subject might be helpful. The ninth grade was selected, and the following inquiry made: If all of your studying had to be done in one of these three places, which would you choose? Why? (a) At home, (b) in the study hall, (c) with the teacher to whom you have just recited. The results are shown in Table VI.

TABLE VI

Junior High School	Number Favoring Home Study	Number Favoring Study Hall	Number Favoring Supervised Study	Total
Aaron Gove.	55	51	123	229
Broadway.	19	38	24	81
Morey.	122	84	117	323
Byers.	57	56	84	197
Grant.	33	43	68	144
Total.	286	272	416	974

1. Home study

a) Reasons for:

Quiet.	108
Concentration	82
Shortened day	17
Time optional and unlimited	49
Better materials	37
Help available from home	22
Develops greater independence	18
Proves to parents that one studies	2
Unlimited time	30

b) Reasons against:	
Uncertainty; duties; company; etc.....	48
Noise.....	10
Tired after day.....	3
Time wasted waiting for help.....	2
2. Study hall	
a) Reasons for:	
Proper study atmosphere.....	104
Reference books.....	34
Free home time for work or play.....	42
Develops independence.....	3
Subject studied is optional, no limit.....	23
Help of teacher.....	30
Help of fellow-pupils.....	3
Concentration.....	15
Independence necessary.....	2
No interruption.....	6
No books to take home.....	3
b) Reasons against:	
Noise.....	10
Disturbances.....	8
Teacher talking.....	1
Unprepared teacher.....	6
3. Supervised study	
a) Reasons for:	
Right teacher is near when help is needed.....	288
One is taught how to study this particular subject.....	36
Better discipline than in study hall.....	8
Certainty of preparation, of completion, of equal preparation.....	21
No books to carry home.....	11
Hard points are anticipated.....	2
Teacher knows individual weaknesses.....	10
Pupil proves intentions.....	21
Follows assignment.....	52
b) Reasons against:	
Time too short for recitation.....	13
Creates dependence.....	2
Not enough reference material.....	1
Monotony.....	1
Cuts enjoyable recitation.....	2

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is the opinion of the committee that the length of the school day should remain approximately the same as at present; that thirty

minutes be allowed for the lunch period; that the day comprise six fifty-five-minute periods with a period of thirty minutes, including passing time, which may be used for assembly, advisory, or club period at the discretion of the principal; and that supervised study be continued in approximately one-half of each period. Two schedules are presented in Table VII. The sixty-minute schedule provides for periods of fifty-five minutes each; the fifty-five-minute schedule, for periods of fifty minutes each.

The replies from the various schools of the country indicate that all realize the importance of vocational, educational, and social advice being given to the members of a junior high school. The

TABLE VII

	Sixty-Minute Schedule	Fifty-five-Minute Schedule
Home room.....	8:30- 8:35	8:30- 8:40
First period.....	8:35- 9:35	8:40- 9:35
Second period.....	9:35-10:35	9:35-10:30
Assembly and club.....	10:35-11:00	10:30-11:00
Third period.....	11:00-12:00	11:00-11:55
First lunch period.....	12:00-12:30	11:55-12:25
Fourth period.....	12:30- 1:00	12:25-12:50
Second lunch period.....	1:00- 1:30	12:50- 1:20
Fifth period.....	1:30- 2:30	1:20- 2:15
Sixth period.....	2:30- 3:30	2:15- 3:10

tabulation shows that there is very little uniformity of practice in the various schools answering the queries.

The sympathetic contact in many schools is made by the use of one or more periods per week as advisory periods, in which home-room or other teachers act as advisors. In addition, the principal, assistant, or special advisors give both general and specific attention to the individual problems of guidance.

The junior high school age is one of transition; it is a try-out period; this period also involves all of the social problems of adolescence. There is no more critical period in the educational life of the boy and girl. It is because of these conditions that the junior high school has been established.

Therefore, it is the suggestion of the committee that someone in each school be given time to solve some of the problems of the individual by skilled vocational, educational, and social guidance.

Every agency in our schools is working toward the solution of these questions, but the problems are too numerous for both teacher and principal to solve them properly along with the many other duties of each in the school. The need is fully as great as in the senior high school.

The weight of opinion on the part of pupils, teachers, and principals is in favor of directed and supervised study during a part of the regular recitation period. The difficulties as set forth in the answers to our inquiries are administrative, as lack of room and teaching force which would permit of long periods, or lack of training of the teaching force, or a very indefinite conception of what direction of study should mean in its concrete application. It is also suggested that no very well defined technique of supervision has been developed in spite of the number of courses which have been given and the books written on the subject. Our inquiries seem to suggest that our own teachers are by no means uniform in methods and practices in their supervision of study; also that a considerable number of those in charge of the junior high schools have not had any extended experience in this field.

Fundamental interest, effort, laws of thought, correct assignment of lesson, and concrete application of these principles to class practice are old themes but are basic in the supervision of study.

It is recommended that the supervisory staff work out and present such courses to our junior high school teachers as shall bring about a clearer idea as to just what direction of study means, how it may best be carried on under schoolroom conditions, and how we may teach pupils to study and to think. The teachers are anxious to have all of the assistance possible in this matter.

It is recognized that the proper supervision of study involves the whole teaching process and that teacher training will not solve the whole matter, but special instruction along this line will focus the attention of the classroom teacher upon the problem and help him to work out his individual solution.